NEATH STATIONS

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Derek Barrie's *A Regional History…..* Vol. 12 (2nd edn, revised by Peter Baughan, 1994), Chapter IX, contains a number of errors, alas, while Michael Quick's *Railway Passenger Stations….. (v.5.05)* shows some uncertainty about **openings** of stations that have served Neath – particularly the 1877 change.

On the **South Wales Railway main line**, the first station opened **Wed 19 June 1850** [1] at virtually the present station site; it was extended somewhat to be used also by the Vale of Neath Railway from its opening in 1851.

From **1 July 1865** [2] – the Vale of Neath by then having decamped to its own station - the 1850 station was closed and replaced by a high level station on the main line, on the west side of the River Neath [3] . This was of wooden ("temporary") construction, and its location – away from the town centre, albeit adjacent to the VoN low level station – was the cause of local dissent.

In the end, rather than construct a *permanent* station at the high level site, the GWR decided to move back to the town centre [4] where the third station opened **Mon 20 August 1877** [5] . The press report specifically said: "Trains will not in future stop at the high level platform" which confirms that until that date they had still been using the 1865 station - not some other temporary facility (no station - temporary or otherwise - opened on 4 June 1877). The third station was remodelled in 1896 and 1978 but remains on that site today.

The **Vale of Neath Railway**, from its opening on **Wed 24 September 1851** [6] , used the SWR's station. However, they diverted to their own station ("low level") [7] when their Swansea & Neath line opened on **Sat 1 August 1863** [8] . When the Swansea extension closed again from **Sat 1 March 1873** [9] , the VoN trains reverted to using a station on the SWR main line – but this was now the 1865 "high level" station so they had to reverse at the junction between the SWR and VoN near the 1850 station site to reach it. When the Swansea & Neath line reopened on **Fri 1 October 1880** [10] , trains used both the 1877 mainline station and the VoN's 1863 "low level" station (which finally closed, as Neath Riverside, from Mon 15 June 1964).

The **Neath & Brecon** used the VoN's 1863 station from **Mon 3 June 1867** [11] until they retreated to their own Cadoxton goods yard from **Thu 1 August 1878** [12] . They returned to the VoN station from **Thu 1 August 1889** [13] .

The latecomer - the **Rhondda & Swansea Bay** – opened their own dead-ended station on **Thu 14 March 1895** [14] . It finally closed, as Neath Canal Side, from Mon 16 September 1935.

The situation as at ca.1913-4 is shown on OS 25" plan Glamorgan XVI.9 at https://maps.nls.uk/view/135196762

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[1] *Cardiff & Merthyr Guardian* 22 June 1850, p.1
[2] *Cardiff Times* 16 Jun 1865, p.6
[3] grid ref. SS749979
[4] grid ref. SS750974
[5] *Western Mail* 18 Aug 1877, p. 4
[6] *The Times* 27 Feb 1852, p.8
[7] grid ref. SS749978
[8] *Cardiff & Merthyr Guardian* 7 Aug 1863, p.4
[9] *Western Mail* 27 Feb 1873, p.4
[10] *Cambrian* 24 Sep 1880, p.4
[11] *Brecon County Times* 8 Jun 1867
[12] *Cambrian* 26 Jul 1878
[13] *Western Mail* 15 Jul 1889
[14] *South Wales Echo* 14 Mar and *Swansea Journal* 16 Mar 1895

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